

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as currently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 are currently pending in this application. Claims 3, 5-7, 10 and 12-14 are amended and Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9 and 11 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment. No new matter is added.

This amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, which after final rejection permits entering of amendments, canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action, or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. It is therefore respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,577,641 to Izumi; and Claims 3, 5-7, 10, and 12-14 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter.

Accordingly, Claims 3, 5-7, 10 and 12-14 are amended to be in independent form including the limitations of base claims and intervening claims, and Claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9 and 11 are canceled thereby rendering moot the rejection in the outstanding Office Action.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

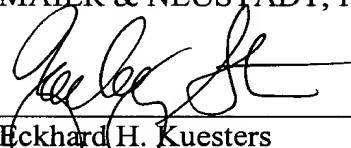
Respectfully submitted,

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